



Asian Peacebuilders unite! As the world gradually re-opens, we are continuing to do our part in rebuilding lives, empowering communities, and promoting peace. More updates inside this issue. Catch the exciting new section - our first EDITORIAL!

The Newsletter Team

# ASIAN PEACEBUILDERS CALL FOR INVESTIGATION ON A COMRADE'S FATE

The APS Alumni Network supported the call for investigation by the University for Peace (UPEACE) Student Council on allegations of arbitrary arrest, incommunicado detention, and torture against an APS Alumnus.

The call was posted online after local news of the fate of Duh Hu Thang aka "PaHu", APS Cohort 13 Alumnus, broke out on 16 April 2021. This was followed by an online vigil organized by UPEACE Student Council.

APS Alumni also led activities to show support in the call for investigation on PaHu's circumstance, as well as to raise awareness about the current situation in Myanmar. In particular, APS Cohort 13 issued a separate call for the immediate release of PaHu, who was suspected to be arrested and detained in the City Gate of Hakha Township, Chin State, Myanmar.

According to reports, PaHu's arrest may have been linked to his role in the Chin National League for Democracy Party. However, there appears to be no charges filed to warrant PaHu's arrest and detention.

In solidarity, the APS Alumni Network will continue to promote human rights and shout Freedom for PaHu!



# ALUMNI STORIES: BE A PEACEBUILDER, BE IN APS!

## Teerapong Praphotjanaporn, An Economist Peacebuilder



“You're an Economist, why are you here?”  
The usual questions asked of Teerapong Praphothanapor relate to the supposed disconnect between Economics and Peace & Conflict Studies, a myth he eventually demystified.

**I have a dream** Teerapong laughs whenever he is asked about his childhood dream, "Whoever studied Economics or Accountancy would like to be the greatest Economist of the world.... That was the dream." It was a given that, after finishing his Bachelor's degree, he pursued a Master's degree in Labor Economics and Human Resource Management.

The dream had taken a different turn when, learning about the Asian Peacebuilders Scholarship (APS), Teerapong was encouraged to apply. Not expecting to pass, he was surprised to get a confirmation email after a tedious interview with the APS Selection Committee.

**The Pursuit of Peace Studies** "You're an Economist, why are you here?" This was one of the first questions that was asked of Teerapong when he arrived at the University for Peace (UPEACE) in Costa Rica.

Teerapong's course at UPEACE was MA in International Peace and Conflict Resolution. "I realized, I know one side of the coin quite well on how the world works, economically speaking. I want to know the other side of the coin on how to make the economic system sustainable. I think peace studies might be one of them. So, I know the hard science already, I want to know the soft science as well," Teerapong explained.

According to Teerapong, the pursuit has been full of memories not only of homework and readings but also of good friendships and fun activities like the Asian Night.

Teerapong admits that his journey was not easy. He had to improve his English skills, which is not his mother tongue. He had to adjust to his "first international experience" and some culture shocks. Despite the challenges, however, Teerapong persevered and clung on friendships and learnings to keep going.

**A Changed Worldview** "Before joining UPEACE, I had no idea about the United Nations. I didn't even know what it was, what it is there for, why do we need to have the UN and what do they do? I had no clue," he said.

Teerapong discovered that some international organizations exist to contribute to a better world. His expanded understanding changed his life and career. His studies paved

the way for him to get an internship at the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in South Korea, his first of many experiences working in the UN.

"I have learned that we're not talking about profit here," Teerapong recounted. "If I were to continue working for the UN, then my skills and strengths will be contributing to a much larger community." After graduating, Teerapong has worked in different UN agencies in Thailand -- the United Nations Children's Fund, International Labour Organization, and the UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific.

**Greatest Takeaways** Of the many lessons that our Economist Peacebuilder has learnt, it is the ability to connect his two disciplines, Economics and Peace, that stood out. "For a statistician, you work with numbers so that you understand the realities, but for peacebuilders you work with people so that you understand the realities. I see a lot of connections," he said.

Teerapong considered the APS instrumental to the improvement of his "overall wisdom that contributed to how I see things in my surroundings, both the personal and organizational level."

**Greatest Opportunity** Teerapong considers APS as one of the greatest opportunities. "This is actually a very successful program. I can certainly say that whether the intention is for raising peace practitioners or instilling peace understanding of conflict resolution to the new generations, these are met through this program." With his achievements and contributions to the betterment of the world, Teerapong is has given meaning to the title of a true Economist Peacebuilder.

“I think APS is one of the greatest opportunities. It contributed to who I have become.”

Read more about Teerapong here: <https://apsan.org/featured-alumni/>





## NAOMI INOUE: BRIDGING GAP THRU PEACEBUILDING

Inspiring Alumni Story

Be a Peacebuilder, Be in APS!



My major, Responsible Management and Sustainable Economic Development, had plenty of opportunities to learn about social issues.



### The Development Gap

Inoue's first real encounter with the development gap happened while studying in Malaysia. She saw how benefits of development ultimately discriminates between the rich and the poor, hence, the gap. Right then, she knew that her purpose is to "bridge" the gap.

### APS: "More than What I Imagined"

Inoue joined the Asian Peacebuilders Scholarship (APS) to find answers to her ultimate questions about the gap. Together with diverse groups of people from different parts of the world, she was able to problematize and explore the world's pressing development issues.

For Inoue, APS helped her more than she had imagined. Aside from acquiring necessary knowledge, this APS alumnae was introduced to varying perspectives and experiences. Being a microcosm of the development field, University for Peace (UPEACE) became her stage to discover her passion to contribute in bridging the gap of development.

### Development Work in Africa

After her APS graduation, Inoue worked in various development organizations, including non-governmental organizations, embassies, and the United Nations.

"I have been mainly working in Africa - Kenya and Uganda - and diverse perspectives and opinions on development that I gained in APS have been useful to me," Inoue said.

Inoue has contributed to these countries' development agenda in different fronts. She has also worked with farmers and women for an evaluation project to improve market access in Mozambique.

### APS facilitates connection and bond.

Inoue remembered how her APS colleagues have helped her even after graduation. "The connections I made at APS helped me during my studies and still do...."

Her APS colleagues have been a source of advice even in professional development. She also meets UPEACE colleagues in her actual work from time to time. "When I conducted field research in Sierra Leone, I met a policy advisor from the Ministry of Mines and Mineral Resources who is actually an alumnus of UPEACE," says Inoue.

Inoue was able to meet professionals from different backgrounds and walks of life in the APS programme. Inspired by her experience in the program, and her drive to continue bridging the gap, Inoue is currently pursuing her post-graduate studies in development at Tokyo University of Foreign Studies.

Read more

about Naomi Inoue here:  
<https://apsan.org/featured-alumni/>





# APS ALUMNI IN ACTION!



## PREVENT SEXUAL VIOLENCE

**Lioni Tobing (APS 8)** is the national coordinator of Sekolah Damai Indonesia (Sekodi). Sekodi organized four discussions about Sexual Violence every Fridays of July 2021. For the final discussion, APS alumni Tran Thi Thuy Binh (APS 8), Sreysros Keo (APS 8) and Pa Pa Phyo (APS 8) shared about efforts to prevent sexual violence in their respective contexts. APSAN applauds this effort and looks forward to more discourse in the future.

## LAUNCH A BOOK

The **APS 12** Mothers' Storybook Project Team published the book, "My Mother is More Than a Comfort Woman," printed by Gantala Press (Philippines) in March 2021. The book is published in Tagalog, English, and Japanese. The online launch held last May 9, 2021 was a success. The book is available for order by email to [gantalapressorders@gmail.com](mailto:gantalapressorders@gmail.com).



## FIGHT HUMAN TRAFFICKING



**Gelie Erika Esteban (APS 11)** is now among the global youth leaders who launched the Youth Against Slavery Movement (YASM). YASM is a global youth movement against human trafficking and other forms of modern slavery. Focusing on prevention and partnerships, it will establish continental hubs, beginning with Africa, to promote relevant sustainable development goals to address the root causes.

## APS AIA PROJECTS

After a year of hiatus, two AIA Grant Awardee - Projects proceeded with project implementation in 2021.

**Emergent Women Peacebuilding** is being implemented by Gelie Erika Esteban (APS 11), Opor Srisuwan (APS 11), and Angel Marie Ysik (APS 12) in the Philippines. Partnering with the Mindanao Tri-People Women Resource Center, the project aims at co-creating a context-sensitive module on gender education for Tri-People (Lumad, Moro and Migrant) youth living in the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao.

**Paglaum Project** was implemented by Andy Alegre (APS 10), Glen Oliva (APS 10) and Grace Mallorca (APS 7), also in the Philippines. The team partnered with St. Mary Euphrasia Integrated Development Foundation Inc. (SMEIDFI) of the Good Sheperd Sisters. They capacitated 30 community leaders to address issues of violence against women and children, as well as human trafficking, especially online sexual exploitation of children.

These projects has concluded in August 2021.

## APSAN UPDATES

ASIAN PEACEBUILDERS SCHOLARSHIP

**INFORMATION SESSION AND ALUMNI TALKS**

26 May 2021  
(National Holiday - Waisak Day)  
9:00AM-10:30AM  
Jakarta Time, GMT+7

For registration:  
<https://bit.ly/53AJk9J>

## APS PROMOTIONS

The Asian Peacebuilders Scholarship opened for application last March 2021. To promote the program, APS alumni from Japan, Vietnam, Thailand, Myanmar, Sri Lanka and Indonesia reached out to potential applicants through a series of online webinars. The deadline for application submission for APS programme was 13 August 2021 and the selection process is ongoing.

## CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT

In August 2021, APSAN is hosting online training program on "Project Design and Proposal Writing" for selected DIPS/ALP/APS alumni. The program is aimed at developing participants' knowledge and skills to ensure that their peacebuilding initiatives are properly planned and supported.

This year's training program will be facilitated by MDF Training and Consultancy ([www.mdf.nl](http://www.mdf.nl)) - an international organization that has over 35 years of experience in conducting similar trainings.

The training is participated by 15 APS alumx from the Philippines, Thailand, Japan, Sri Lanka, Indonesia, and Turkmanistan.

## PEACE IN ASIA

APSAN alumni are developing and testing context-sensitive modules on peace education in Asia. In 2020, one module had been developed and validated in Vietnam. From May to June 2021, two peace education modules have been developed in Sri Lanka and The Philippines. These modules will be validated within the month of August 2021.



## MESSAGE FROM

# ADRIANA

*Head of Department,  
Department of Peace and conflict studies*

### Dear APS community

The Covid-19 pandemic has forced many of us to reflect on the diverse national and international policies and responses designed to tackle the virus and its impacts. Long-time inequalities and challenges have become more evident in critical areas such as gender, food insecurity, human rights, multilateralism, and economic opportunities, among others.

Nevertheless, this global crisis has also helped to reveal the critical role and amazing work that peacebuilders worldwide have played, and continue to play, in their communities by engaging in

humanitarian emergencies and conflict settings to reconstruct relationships and advance peace. You are an example of this amazing work. Please continue to engage in and advance peace initiatives wherever you are, with resilience and hope. Remember that resilient efforts should go beyond 'bouncing back to 'normality', but rather to 'building back better' with the expectation of addressing several of the inequalities underlying conflict. The world needs you more than ever!

With appreciation and solidarity, Adriana

### JOIN. CONNECT. COLLABORATE

Signup to be a member of the APSAN secretariat!!!

APS alumni secretariat is formed to mobilize the APS alumni body and facilitate and guide activities to create opportunities for alumx and enhance the connection among alumni members. The Secretariat is made of multiple workgroups that have key functions of a). Manage Communication & Media Outreach, b) Facilitate Alumni-led Initiatives & Career Development, c) Management of Alumni Database & Events.

The secretariat members will work with Alumni Relations Officer at UPEACE to initiate, conduct and monitor the APSAN activities. The secretariat is volunteer engagement. However, a volunteer reimbursement will be applied to the secretariat members in valuing their contribution.

We have opened the call for application as the current secretariat will be completing its tenure in September 2021.

### JOIN THE NIPPON FOUNDATION'S ALUMNI PLATFORM

The Nippon Foundation has been implementing various scholarship programs for more than 30 years across the world. There are more than 40,000 scholars who have received scholarships from The Nippon Foundation, and the alumni are active in various fields of expertise. We are excited to be included in this network, which is launched as a new online platform for The Nippon Foundation Scholars!

The platform has a lot of features including being up-to-date with the announcements from TNF and APSAN, as well as interacting with other scholars and sharing your experiences and knowledge, regardless of the regions, fields of expertise, or scholarship groups.

We hope this will be a useful tool to expand opportunities and promote as a hub for social innovation.

### BE PART OF THE TEAM!

#### Join the APSAN Secretariat and help steer the growing network!

APSAN is looking for a new set of alumni-leaders to mobilize and guide fellow alumni through different work streams: 1) Media and Outreach; 2) Alumni-Led Initiatives and career Development; and 3) Alumni Events and Database.



**REGISTER NOW** <https://forms.gle/hXenZDYWdXWFijn8A>

### JOIN THE TNFSA HUB!

#### Sign up for a chance to meet fellow scholars!

The Nippon Foundation (TNF) has supported more than 40,000 scholars across the world in the past 30 years. This year, TNF is connecting the TNF scholars' Association in a new platform.



**REGISTER NOW** <https://tnfsa.nippon-foundation.or.jp/signup>



JOIN



CONNECT



COLLABORATE

**Are you an APS alumx?** Join the APS Alumni Network's Facebook Page, and be in the know of the latest APS updates and collaboration opportunities with your fellow Asian Peacebuilders!